



## ***AOT in Action***

### ***TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!***

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

#### **A Message from the Director:**

Good morning.

As many of you in the tourism industry know, we are right in the heart of our busy travel season and AOT staff is on the road sharing the Arizona message with key audiences in our domestic and international markets. I have also been on the road, participating in travel industry meetings and conferences on behalf of our tourism industry here in Arizona. Two weeks ago I attended the Western States Tourism Policy Council meeting in Washington DC. The WSTPC is an organization that focuses on travel and visitation on federal lands of the western states. We met with our federal partners to discuss potential opportunities and issues for the tourism industry, especially as it pertains to visitor access to federal lands. After that meeting, I then was a part of the Spring Forum for the National Council of State Tourism Organizations, an organization that brings together tourism directors from all 50 states and U.S. territories. We held a joint work session with the Travel Industry Association of America to ensure our work agendas were aligned on issues impacting tourism.

I also attended the Border Trade Alliance International Conference, “Balancing Security, Commerce, & the Flow of People at Our International Borders,” in Washington DC. The event focused on border infrastructure development and strategies for utilizing it. I was on a panel discussing border technology and immigration policy. There were many items discussed including the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative and US-VISIT programs. An update was given on the latest progress among these federal security programs including issues such as implementation and effectiveness as well as how they affect travel and trade. As we receive more information about these programs, we will pass the information along to you through AOT in Action.

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann  
Director  
Arizona Office of Tourism

## AOT News Flash

### AOT Offers Online Chat Tool

Have a question about jeeps tours in Sedona? Or maybe you have a question about visiting hours for Kartchner Caverns State Park. Now all your Arizona traveling questions can be answered with AOT's new online chat tool. The tool can be found on the AOT Web site where visitors seeking answers to questions about Arizona will have 24-hour accessibility to travel counselors who can answer travel questions. To access the online chat tool visit, [www.arizonaguide.com](http://www.arizonaguide.com) and click on Chat Live.

### AOT Posts 2006 4th Quarter Newsletter

The 4th Quarter Research Tourism Indicator Newsletter is now available on the Research section of [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov). The newsletter contains 4th quarter 2006 indicators for lodging, air passenger traffic, tourism related tax revenues, State and National Park visitation and visitor counts from Painted Cliffs Welcome Center. For more information, contact Melissa Elkins, Research Manager, at (602) 364-3716 or via e-mail at [melkins@azot.gov](mailto:melkins@azot.gov).

## Trippin' with AOT

### New Arizona Roadshow Reaches Out to Mexican Travel Market

The Arizona Office of Tourism will target Mexican tour operators and travel agents at the first Arizona Roadshow. AOT plans to make the Roadshow an annual event. This year, the Arizona Roadshow will be held in Mexico City and Guadalajara from May 28 – June 1, 2007. The Roadshow will highlight a prominent guest speaker, destination seminars and tour operator sales calls. Registration cost is \$1,995 per delegate and includes two nights accommodation in Mexico City and two nights accommodation in Guadalajara. For more information please contact Kristy Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via e-mail at [kswanson@azot.gov](mailto:kswanson@azot.gov).

### AAA FAM Tour

AOT's Travel Industry Marketing division recently hosted five AAA/CAA travel agents on a familiarization (FAM) tour entitled "Native Ruins of Arizona." Two of the agents were from the eastern United States (New Jersey and Connecticut), one from Michigan and two from Colorado. This very well-received FAM tour made stops on the Gila River Indian Reservation, the Fort McDowell Indian Reservation, Phoenix, Prescott and Sedona and highlighted attractions such as the Chapel of the Holy Cross, Radisson Fort McDowell Resort, the Hassayampa Inn, the Heard Museum, the Pueblo Grande Museum Archaeological Park, the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort

& Spa, the Sharlot Hall Museum and the Smoki Museum. For more information please contact Kristy Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via e-mail at [kswanson@azot.gov](mailto:kswanson@azot.gov).

### **San Francisco Media Mission**

Heather Koncilja, AOT's Media Relations Manager, went to San Francisco last week to meet with travel writers. In an event put on jointly by AOT, the Greater Phoenix CVB and Scottsdale CVB, Heather met with 30 journalists and talked to them about Arizona story ideas for the upcoming months. Several Valley-area resorts also participated in this event. For more information, please contact Heather at [hkoncilja@azot.gov](mailto:hkoncilja@azot.gov).

### **Arizona Represented at Go West Summit**

AOT staff attended the Go West Summit in Portland, Oregon from February 12 -15, 2007. Go West is an annual seminar and marketplace for tour operators and Western States regional tourism suppliers. There were approximately 80 operators from Europe, Latin America and Asia in attendance, in addition to many U.S. based receptive operators. The three-day event comprised of seminars and guest speakers, along with two days of pre-scheduled 15-minute appointments with the tour operators to review both their current and potential Arizona product. For more information, please contact Hylton Fothergill at 602 364 3706 or via e-mail at [hfothergill@azot.gov](mailto:hfothergill@azot.gov).

## **Industry News**

### **U.S. Launches Passport Awareness Campaign**

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is reminding travelers planning spring break trips to Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean to apply now for their passports. The new passport requirement, under the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, went into effect on Jan. 23 and applies to all air travel into the U.S. It affects all citizens of the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Bermuda who previously could use such forms of ID as a birth certificate, driver's license or other accepted document. The CBP has created public service ads to help raise awareness of the requirement that can be downloaded at [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov). (*Modern Agent.com, 3/1*)

### **Airport Fitness Clubs for the Business Traveler**

Fitness-oriented road warriors often fantasize about jumping out of bed at the crack of dawn and rushing to a gleaming hotel gym for a pep-inducing workout. The reality is that the crack of dawn arrives way too early. And the hotel "gym" often turns out to be nothing more than a wobbly stationary bike, a worn treadmill and a pile of mismatched weights. For many business travelers, the airport could turn out to be the place to get a dream workout on the road. About half a dozen airports have fitness clubs either right in the terminal or in hotels attached to a terminal. Offering day passes at \$15 or less, these clubs can include everything from the latest workout equipment to lap pools, whirlpool tubs, saunas and spa and massage services. All have showers and a few sell T-shirts, shorts, swimsuits and other items travelers need for their workouts. (*Page 8B, USA Today*)

### **U.S., Canadian Partnership Calls for Changes in Passport Rules**

A group of American business and Canadian political leaders is teaming up to urge the U.S. State and Homeland Security departments to explore alternatives to a passport before implementing the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative passport requirement at land and sea entry points. Three Canadian premiers and leaders from the American travel industry are concerned that the WHTI will diminish trade and tourism; cost jobs and disrupt the daily lives of American and Canadian citizens if not properly implemented. The group is calling on State and DHS to use the extended

deadline of June 2, 2009, granted by Congress to allow for the development and testing of options other than a passport and to ensure necessary infrastructure, training and technology are funded and in place along the Canada-U.S. border. For more details contact 202-408-2183. (*Special to TA; Modern Agent.com*)

### **TIA Announces Theme for National Tourism Week**

The Travel Industry Association announced that this year's National Tourism Week activities will take place May 12-20. Theme of the observance will be "Tourism: America's Front Door." The nine-day recognition provides cities, states and travel-related businesses nationwide with the opportunity to collectively champion the power of travel. The theme is intended to illustrate the importance of travel to America's image and suggests its impact as a leading industry. Details and information on resources are available at [www.tia.org/TWFA](http://www.tia.org/TWFA). (*Modern Agent.com; Special to TA*)

### **US Airways Plans Nonstop Flight to China**

US Airways plans to announce that it will seek federal approval to start flying next year nonstop between Philadelphia and China. It would be the region's first air service to Asia. US Airways told the U.S. Department of Transportation last month that it planned to join other airlines in competing for the next available U.S.-China route. But the airline had not said previously whether it wanted to start the service from Philadelphia or one of its other hubs, Phoenix or Charlotte, N.C. Delta, American, Continental, Northwest and Hawaiian airlines also have expressed interest in having nonstop flights between one of their hub cities and China. (*Philadelphia Inquirer.com/Business*)

### **More Americans looking for relaxing vacations**

A recent study by Yesawich, Pepperdine, Brown & Russell found that nearly three quarters of American adults state they are actively trying to find ways to reduce the level of stress in their lives and seeking relief, both at home and while on vacation. The study also indicated that spa-going has become an increasingly popular recreational activity for Americans on vacation. This is particularly true for affluent leisure travelers (those with an annual household income over \$150,000, or the top 7 percent of all households defined by annual income). As revealed in the "2006 Portrait of Affluent Travelers"™, almost half of all affluent leisure travelers visited a spa at a luxury hotel or resort at least once during the previous year. This appears to be a direct result of the growing level of stress in contemporary life. Canyon Ranch tops the list of most visited spa locations, followed by Four Seasons and The Palms in Palm Springs. And contrary to what you might conclude from the endless stream of articles in the press about increasingly-exotic spa treatments, the most popular spa treatment is an old favorite: massage. Pedicures and facials follow. For more insights from the "2006 Portrait of Affluent Travelers"™ please [click here](#).

### **U.S. Tourism Rises to Pre-Sept. 11 Levels**

International tourists spent a record amount in the U.S. last year, according to government data, beating the previous high set before the 2001 terrorist attacks, Associated Press has reported. International travelers spent more than \$107 billion last year - an amount that includes food, lodging, recreation, gifts, plane fares and cruise fares, the Commerce Department said on Thursday. That's up from an earlier record of \$103 billion spent in 2000. "We have seen full recovery in spending by visitors to the United States since September 11," Ana Guevara, the Commerce Department's deputy assistant secretary for services said in a prepared statement. "This is good news for the U.S. travel and tourism industry, which employed 8.3 million Americans last year."

## **Scottsdale Seeks Photos and Memories to Help Celebrate 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. They plan to commemorate this milestone throughout the year by promoting the anniversary through publications and announcements. The Scottsdale CVB is seeking photos and/or images from the past 20 years to document Scottsdale's history. They are looking for images of hotels, golf courses and other businesses in Scottsdale, significant events and milestones, as well as pictures of people who made an impact on their community. In addition, they are seeking unique stories and memories that the public may have from the past 20 years of Scottsdale. These images and significant moments may be used in Scottsdale CVB communication materials to their members and media, the 2007 annual meeting or simply to have on record as part of their history.

**The deadline to send materials is Friday, March 16.**

You can e-mail pictures or stories (3-5 sentences long) to Tatum Luoma at [tluoma@scottsdalecvb.com](mailto:tluoma@scottsdalecvb.com). Or you can mail images to the following:

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